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A CATHOLIC REVIEW OF THE WEEK

VOLUME LXXII

15 CENTS

NUMBER 22

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# SUICIDE BENT SANGERIZING MANKIND

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# COMMENT ON THE WEEK

**"Bloodiest in 168 years."** A casualty toll of 5,372 for fifty-eight hours of battle makes the Leathernecks' assault of Iwo the most costly fighting in the whole history of the Marine Corps. This daring invasion, while it carries the war inexorably into the heart of Japan, emphasizes the hard road that lies ahead. The Japanese are shown, wherever we have come to decisive grips with them, to be desperate last-ditch fighters; they pay dearly for every Iwo cave, they still hold out fanatically in Manila's Intramuros. The hopeful note that rises stronger amid the sad casualty lists is that more and more the Japanese stands are becoming last-ditch ones. There is another factor, too, that ought not to be overlooked: it is good to remember, when you glimpse the banner headlines that announce "5,000 casualties," that of such a costly number, only some 600 have been killed; it is good to remember that, thanks to the magnificent work of the Medical Corps on the field and here in rehabilitation centers, the number of the wounded who fully recover is almost miraculous. The costs of the war are high, how high only those families know who have been bereaved, but in our sober realization of them, it is good to recall the care our military leaders are exercising to spare lives.

**Vatican and Labor.** Two American labor leaders, back from an investigation of Italian union affairs, are making no secret of their admiration for the Holy Father. During their stay in Rome, Luigi Antonini of the AFL and George Baldanzi of the CIO were able to study the activities of Pius XII at first hand. They found out what the Communists are anxious to suppress and what the American press has inadequately reported—that all during the Nazi occupation the Papacy provided shelter and assistance to all who needed it regardless of race or creed. A personal interview with the Holy Father increased the respect of these labor leaders. "It was a great act of humanity," Mr. Baldanzi said he told the Holy Father, referring to the Vatican's charity, "which American workers profoundly appreciate. They also express the same thankfulness for the social teachings of the Pope, the aims of which coincide perfectly with the intentions and aims of the American people." This tribute from the democratic American trade-union movement comes at a propitious time. It highlights the calumnious nature of the campaign which Moscow is currently waging against the Vatican; as is shown by other events as well.

**"Poisoned Rumors."** We may seem to be speaking in a somewhat ungenerous fashion. But we cannot help noticing that the Soviet press does not yet seem to have learned the art of presenting its denials of annoying reports and conjectures in a fashion that will bring much conviction to the rest of the world—certainly not to American readers. Perhaps a whole galaxy of some of this country's most competent commentators and correspondents—George Axelsson and Harold Callender of the *New York Times*, Dorothy Thompson, Constantine Brown, Paul Ward, William Philip Simms and others—were mistaken when they said that it looked very much as if Moscow was planning to use the captured German generals as the basis for a provisional government in conquered Germany. And it looks as if plans to this effect may have been dropped since the conference at Yalta, for since that event, the Generals have stopped talking over the radio. Nevertheless, these journalists were describing the scene exactly as it appeared, and it is by no

means clear that the Soviet regime did not want it to look just that way. When the cry of "malice" and "Fascism" and "poisoned rumors" is screamed at such a very soberly conceived observation, people in this country will know what to think when the same press hurls its frantic epithets against the Pope and the Vatican.

**World Labor in London.** After an eleven-day meeting in London, which threatened several times to dissolve in disagreement, labor representatives from almost all the United Nations voted unanimously to create a "powerful democratic world trade-union federation at the earliest possible date." To implement this resolution, a committee of forty-one members was empowered to draft a constitution, to invite labor organizations not present at the London conference to affiliate with the proposed organization, and to convene another world congress before the end of 1945 to act on the new constitution. In view of the circumstances which led to the meeting, these developments must be said to represent at least a partial victory for the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Barred from membership in the International Federation of Trade Unions by AFL opposition to dual unionism, the CIO went to London determined to establish a new world organization that would replace the exclusive IFTU. There it found allies in the Soviet trade unions, in some Catholic groups, and in the Latin-American Confederation headed by pro-Communist Lombardo Tole-dano. For various reasons (cf. AMERICA, January 27, p. 324), none of these labor groups has been permitted to affiliate with the IFTU. Thus, while the CIO failed in its endeavor to create a new organization on the spot, it did succeed, despite some British unwillingness, in obtaining a

## THIS WEEK

COMMENT ON THE WEEK.....	421
The Nation at War.....Col. Conrad H. Lanza	423
Washington Front.....Wilfrid Parsons	423
Underscorings.....Louis E. Sullivan	423
ARTICLES	
Land and Water in California.....Richard E. Mulcahy	424
Stumping for God.....Mary Virginia Doyle	426
A National Mission for Postwar America.....Rev. Dr. John K. Ryan	427
New York's Anti-Bias Bill.....John LaFarge	429
EDITORIALS .....	430
Postscript to Yalta . . . HOLC Reports . . . "Equal Rights" Again . . . Education for Veterans	
LITERATURE AND ART.....	432
Murder Most Delectable.....Charles A. Brady	
BOOKS .....	REVIEWED BY
The Journal of Mary Hervey Russell.....Josephine Nicholls Hughes	434
Verdict on India.....Voiceless India.....Lourdu M. Yeddanapalli	434
Without Bitterness: Western Nations in Postwar Africa.....Martin J. Bane, S. M. A.	435
THEATRE.....FILMS.....PARADE	438
CORRESPONDENCE.....THE WORD	439

positive commitment which must be acted on before the year is out. Where this leaves the IFTU and the AFL was not immediately clear.

**Britain and the Poles.** G. H. Hall, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, told the Parliament on February 20 that the British Government "attaches great importance to the freeing by the Soviet Union of all members of the former Polish underground and army who fought against the Germans." This is a frank admission of what the Polish Government had alleged—that the Soviets were disarming and interning the Polish fighters whom the Government had ordered to cooperate with the Red Army. The British conscience—and the American, too, for that matter—may well be uneasy over the fate of the Poles. And not only of the men whose reward for five years of desperate fighting against Nazism was a Russian prison camp, but of the millions of Catholic Poles whom Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill have agreed to let Russia take over. This war, we have been told, is a fight for the Four Freedoms. Britain and America have a very clear idea of what Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Speech mean. Roosevelt and Churchill cannot be ignorant of the fact that neither exists under the Soviet regime. British and American honor will be forever compromised if no firm stand is taken on these in the final negotiations with Russia about the populations which Russia would seem to be on the point of absorbing.

**"Political Liability."** Though a place on the delegation to the United Nations Conference at San Francisco would be a personal political liability, Commander Stassen accepted it because, as he said: "I feel it as much my duty to take an assignment to work for a successful peace as to work for a successful war." For this readiness to put the welfare of the nation above personal political fortunes we can have nothing but praise. We cannot but ask ourselves, however, why to undertake a work of transcendent national and international importance should be a political liability. Does the Commander fear that the results will be so unpopular as necessarily to alienate the people from all who had hand or part in the Conference? Perhaps there is room for some meditation on Washington's warning to the Constitutional Convention: "If to please the people we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterwards defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and just may repair. The event is in the hand of God." And there is room, too, for another *Federalist* job, to help the people to find more readily the path of wisdom and justice. The Republican Party, through its representation at the forthcoming conference, has a great opportunity of doing a notable work for this Republic and for the whole world.

**Expanding Naval R.O.T.C.** It is significant news that the President has signed the Vinson Bill (H.R. 621) amending the Naval Reserve Act of 1925. The new Bill increases the total personnel of the N.R.O.T.C. from 7,200 to 24,000 until one year after the war, at which time the number will be gradually decreased to a permanent quota of 14,000. At present 27 institutions are maintaining an N.R.O.T.C. unit. To these units the Navy plans to add 23 other colleges and universities. It is understood that no more students will be enrolled in the Navy V-12 program and that the Navy intends to reduce and finally consolidate the V-12 program with the N.R.O.T.C. unit. This transformation will be well under way by July 1. The Vinson Bill seems to have a double significance. First, it may be an indirect indication

of what many have thought all along, that off the record and if left free-handed in its own affairs, the Navy would not want compulsory military training, but would gladly return to its well established recruitment program. The second significance is the example of educational leadership the Navy is exercising. It expects the colleges and universities having an N.R.O.T.C. unit to give future commissioned officers of the Navy a real education, and it voices its confidence that the educational institutions can do this job better than the Navy can do it. Thus the expanded N.R.O.T.C. organization will be placed on an eight-term basis, enabling the students to obtain a complete college education before being commissioned. To such confidence and challenge the colleges will react fruitfully. For plans ahead the Navy again steals a march on the Army.

**Red Cross Drive.** During March the American Red Cross is putting on its annual drive for funds. Both in the field and on the home front, the Red Cross stands ready to render every possible service. It has organized and maintains the blood banks—the greatest single factor, perhaps, in saving the lives of our wounded. It makes contacts with the people at home for men in the fighting forces who have family, financial or legal difficulties. These are only two of a multitude of ways in which the Red Cross helps our fighters, our wounded, our prisoners of war. Every American should feel it his duty not only to contribute to the drive, but to visit a local Red Cross center to see how he can help it.

**"Il Quotidiano" Comes Out Swinging.** *Il Quotidiano*, Catholic Action newspaper published in Rome, has taken the offensive against the relentless attacks of the Soviet press and radio against the Vatican. In a strongly-worded editorial, reported February 2 by N.C.W.C. *News Service*, it demands a clear statement of Soviet plans with regard to the Catholic populations of Central and Eastern European countries. "What fate," it asks, "does the Soviet intend for 84,000,000 Catholics in the light of its demands that Vatican influence be excluded in these countries?"

What are Soviet intentions for the vassal states which will arise from Soviet inspiration? Does Russia want to prevent the Church from interesting itself in these faithful? Will Russia forbid these Catholics to consider the Roman Pontiff as their spiritual head?

Asserting that the "harsh words" Russia has used against the Vatican "must be related to Moscow's plans for external action," the Catholic organ said, as quoted in *Religious News Service*, "the Church which has been fighting for twenty centuries is not frightened by the present struggle."

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## THE NATION AT WAR

THE GREAT WINTER BATTLE on the east German front was started on January 12. After nearly five weeks of continuous fighting on an extraordinarily fierce scale, it is now possible to evaluate some of the results.

Undoubtedly the Germans foresaw the Russian offensive. They made certain preparations to meet it, involving an abandonment of much of Poland. The German army got back in rear of the Oder River without too serious losses. It took the Russians two weeks to reach this line. Then they began to meet strong opposition.

The Germans appear to have been surprised by the strength of the Russian forces which enabled the Red Army to break across the Oder River in Silesia. In the first two weeks the Russians had advanced some 180 miles. In the next three weeks the advance has been under 75 miles. This has been in the south part of Germany.

In the center the Russians have not advanced during the first half of February. In the north—in Pomerania and in East Prussia—the Russian advance has not exceeded 75 miles in three weeks.

While it may be quite possible that the loss of Poland was contemplated by the German High Command as a temporary expedient, the incursion of the Russians into Silesia was not intended. This has greatly damaged the economic condition of Germany. At date of writing, Feb. 20, the Germans have nearly stopped this attack. In the north, the Germans have found troops to start a minor offensive, which has retaken some unimportant areas in Pomerania. They have not stopped the Russians in East Prussia, but they have in Latvia, where Russian attacks seem to have failed completely.

In the meantime, the Allies are attacking the west German front. Unlike the rapid advances of the Russians, that in the west is slow and deliberate. The Germans have recently sent some reserve divisions to oppose the British attack. As other divisions had been sent to the Russian front, it seems the German reserves have not yet been exhausted. There is no reliable information as to whether more German divisions are still in reserve. The fighting is not likely to stop until the last reserves have been sent into line. When that happens, the end will be near.

COL. CONRAD H. LANZA

## WASHINGTON FRONT

THIS OBSERVER cannot report with any degree of honesty that the Congress has particularly distinguished itself during the absence of the President. Perhaps it would be better to say that it has given an example of the checks rather than the balances in our Constitutional system. Or maybe it is merely an illustration of the Constitutional development that has taken place since President Taft went out of office.

According to this development, the President is not only the President; he is also the leader of his party. The first Roosevelt was, of course, keenly aware of this, even before Taft; and after him perhaps Harding was not aware enough of it. But Wilson, Coolidge, Hoover and F. D. Roosevelt have practised it vigorously.

In practice, this means that the President is also the leader of the majority in both parts of the legislative branch, as the Prime Minister is in Britain. He really gives the lead in legislation, and his assistants write most of the important bills. He is "on top" of the legislative process all along, and it is he who accepts the necessary compromises, or gives the word to stand firm on points the party cannot concede.

The reason for this little disquisition in constitutional development is that when Mr. Roosevelt comes back the Congress will find itself faced with a terrific schedule of necessary peace legislation. And, by his very absence, we have been given a demonstration of how much, under this twentieth-century development, the Congress is dependent on the President for smooth progress.

The same day on which the Yalta conference's results were published, the President outlined the program that is before Congress. The main point, the Charter of the General International Organization, will not come up until after San Francisco, of course. But right now, the Congress has to pass on the international food agreement, the Bretton Woods banking arrangements, the reciprocal-trade agreements, lowering of tariffs, cartel control, the Export-Import Bank, international agreements on oil, aviation, shipping and communications. That impressive program, as set forth by the President, will tax his own qualities of leadership to the limit, and will be an unprecedented challenge to Congress itself.

WILFRID PARSONS

## UNDERSCORINGS

AMERICAN GENEROSITY in responding to the appeal of Pope Pius XII for relief of war victims in Italy was warmly praised in *Osservatore Romano*. After a detailed review of work done by the American Red Cross, the Allied Zone Commands and the War Relief Services-N.C.W.C., the article concludes: "The light of charity shines everywhere. It will be the most effective flame for enkindling among men the spirit of comprehension and love."

► "Undisciplined power wins no victories" Chief of Chaplains, Msgr. William R. Arnold, says in a statement to service men on "What Lent Means To Me!" "Lent reminds us," he continues, "that self-imposed restraint creates a reservoir of spiritual strength, that a period of self-sacrifice is the seeding time for a rich harvest."

► A total of 106 new scholarships for Latin-American and Canadian students has been created by seventy Catholic universities and colleges in the U. S., reports the Inter-American Collaboration Section of the Department of Education-N.C.W.C. Latin-American students and a few Cana-

dians in 65 Catholic universities and colleges in this country already fill 141 such scholarships.

► An appeal for understanding between members of different religions was made by the Most Rev. Daniel F. Desmond, Bishop of Alexandria, La., at the dedication of the National Catholic Community Service Club at Glenmore, La. Speaking to an audience of prominent clergymen, Army and Navy officers and civic officials, he said that the occasion "appropriately complies with the wishes of Holy Mother Church that people of all faiths intermingle for better understanding as becomes Christian Americans."

► Continued acts of violence against suspected collaborators in France were denounced by Pierre Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyons, in a pastoral letter deplored "the temporary abolition of human brotherhood of which we are distressed witnesses." Stating that unity is the first step in reconstruction, he urged his people to help the needy and "to relight everywhere the flame of energy and confidence."

LOUIS E. SULLIVAN

# LAND AND WATER IN CALIFORNIA

RICHARD E. MULCAHY

THERE IS A FIGHT going on in California—and in the halls of Congress. It is about land and water. The outcome will determine to a certain extent whether California's agriculture will continue to be dominated by large, commercial, specialized farms as in the past, or whether in the fertile valleys and rolling foothills will be seen numerous, small, diversified family farms. And the result will also have repercussions on the future application throughout the West of the traditional American land policy.

The controversy is whether the 160-acre limitation clause of the Reclamation Laws shall be applied in the California Central Valley project. Today, under the National Reclamation Act of 1902, water from the great dams now being built in the vast Central Valley will not be delivered to more than 160 acres of any single proprietor's land. It is this provision which certain large landowners wish to have removed. (In the closing days of the last Congress they blocked the passage of the important Rivers and Harbors Bill by causing a deadlock between the House and the Senate over the Elliott Amendment, which would have exempted the Central Valley project from the 160-acre limitation.)

This 160-acre limitation clause has been the chief weapon of the United States Government in its traditional endeavor to foster family-size farms. This historic clause has been written into the paragraphs of the Homestead Act of 1862 and the National Reclamation Act of 1902, and has since been confirmed by Congress more than a dozen times. Under the Reclamation Laws the Government has the right to withhold the water of a national project from land over 160 acres of a single owner, until he agrees to execute a contract to sell his excess land at a fair price fixed by the Secretary of the Interior.

## THE LAND BARONS

The scene of the controversy, the Central Valley project, is not just an ordinary irrigation ditch. Authorized by Congress in 1937, it will cost over \$300 million. It includes the Shasta and the Friant dams, two of the world's four largest concrete dams. It embraces two million acres of land lying between the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada, and extending from Mount Shasta to Bakersfield. It is the heart of agricultural California. Moreover, there is a proposed \$1,500-million postwar extension of the project, which will serve an additional seven to eight million acres.

In no other State in the Union would the real issue behind the 160-acre limitation clause have been brought so clearly to the fore as in California: the issue of the large commercial farm vs. the family-size farm. This is because the Golden State's perennial problem has been the large landholdings.

Land monopolization in California dates back to the Spanish and Mexican periods, when large grants were made to favored individuals. In the wild 'Sixties one speculator alone, William S. Chapman, acquired a million acres of the best lands. In the 'Seventies it was reported that "one private individual owns 350,000 acres" and forty-five men possessed "about 4,000,000 of the best unoccupied acres of land in the State." No wonder that in this period large landholdings were called the "curse of California"; and landholders were described as "land barons."

Today the monopolization of land still exists in California.

Between 1930 and 1940, the number of farms of a thousand acres or more increased from 5,054 to 5,265. And in 1940 only four per cent of all owners held *sixty-six per cent of all farm lands!* One company alone, the Kern County Land Co., owns directly or through subsidiaries 413,500 acres in California.

But in a community or a nation, does it matter whether its farms are large or small?

## THE FARM AND THE COMMUNITY

Small farms increase the wealth of the nation by developing the land. They expand nearby cities and towns. They increase the nation's market for refrigerators, automobiles and other consumer goods.

But more important than the economic benefits are the stability of community life and the practice of religion which small family farms ensure. In studies made by the Department of Agriculture and the agricultural colleges of the United States, it was found that a close relationship exists between farm ownership and the well-being of the rural community. Where farms are operated by resident owners, the community is stable, homes are improved, church and school attendance is more regular and there is a general interest in community activities.

Bishop Robert Armstrong of Sacramento recently testified that large farms have an unstable influence, and that he favored the 160-acre idea for "the good it will do." He said that in California "sometimes you need a telescope to see a home." Wherever he goes, his priests say to him: "You want to start a parish? Well, with these big farms you can't start a parish; you can't build up." Speaking of the Yakima Valley in Washington, where he had been stationed fifteen years and where the 160-acre limitation is in effect, Bishop Armstrong said: "It is an empire of homes. . . . It is a delight to live amongst those people."

This same general thought was expressed by Pope Pius XII in his September address:

When the distribution of property is an obstacle to this end (the genuine productivity of social life and the normal returns of national economy) . . . the state may, in the public interest, intervene by regulating its use or even, if it cannot equitably meet the situation in any other way, by decreeing the expropriation of property, giving a suitable indemnity. For the same purpose *small and medium holdings in agriculture . . . should be guaranteed and promoted* (Italics mine).

Large farms, on the other hand, are a strong force towards instability. They not only deny ownership opportunities to many families by their monopoly of the best lands; they positively lead to many social evils. Farm tenancy, which is on the increase in the United States, is one of the direct evils of concentrated land holdings.

Probably the greatest evil of the large commercial farm is that it necessarily requires a large floating labor reserve which, though unemployed a large part of the year, must be available whenever and wherever the demand exists. This is the famous migratory worker problem. Space does not permit an adequate treatment of the problem, but I will offer a few of the findings from the many studies cited in the famed but seldom read 1942 report by Senator La Follette on conditions among California's agricultural laborers.

Studies of the employment of migratory agricultural labor in California during the 'Thirties show that the average number of months during which these laborers receive employment is between six and seven. The public relief required to support these workers when not employed is

nothing more than a public subsidy for the large commercial farm operators.

Not only have these workers no stable employment, but they must live on wheels, following the crops. A study made by the California State Relief Administration in 1937 of migratory agricultural-labor families in the San Joaquin Valley revealed that they had traveled an average of 516 miles in one year; and that 15 per cent traveled 1,000 miles or more.

The wages paid these migratory workers are notoriously low. Twenty-five cents an hour was the general farm wage in California before the war. A study by the Resettlement Administration in 1935 found that the average annual earnings of migratory laborers were about \$250 per worker and between \$450 and \$500 per family. The wage rate is determined for the most part by employer associations, organized and led by the large operators.

The housing conditions of these migratory workers are a crying abuse. Sometimes they live in private labor camps, which are described as "generally poor, and [very often] squalid and unfit for human habitation." In the Madera County cotton camps, the average number of occupants was five persons per room.

#### FAMILIES IN SHACK-TOWN

Many of these itinerant workers live in shantytowns, where the dwellings are built of brush, rags, sacks, boxboard, odd bits of tin and galvanized iron or pieces of canvas. In a Tulare County shack-town it was found that there was roughly one bed for every two persons—and almost one-third of the beds were single beds. In many instances there were no mattresses; and some had to sleep on the floor. At other times the "home" of these workers is nothing more than a ditch-bank, a roadside or some other kind of wretched squatter camp.

Because of the unsanitary living conditions and low income, the health of these agricultural workers, especially among the children, is such that it often shocks even the more case-hardened members of the Bureau of Child Hygiene.

Children who must travel from place to place, who must work in the fields whenever the crops are ready, who suffer from malnutrition and rickets, cannot be expected to make progress in school. One official of the California State Department of Education is reported to have said:

Local authorities are frequently in full sympathy with the grower who must get his crop harvested. Sometimes members of local schoolboards are employers of migratory labor and cannot view the problem impartially from the point of view of child welfare. The walnut-grower or the prune-grower feels his own economic need far more than he feels the child's need of education.

Against this array of facts from the LaFollette report, Senator Downey of California, who favors removing the 160-acre-limitation clause from the Central Valley project, has advanced a rather specious argument. According to Senator Downey, the migratory labor problem will not be mitigated by the breaking up of large holdings into smaller farms, because, as he says, "If you have ten men, each owning a hundred acres of pears, you have virtually the same problem as if you have one pear-grower on a thousand acres."

The Senator has overlooked a couple of points. Not only are there ten farmers on the thousand acres where before there was only one, but each of the ten farmers has a family (which is usually rather large on a farm), each may have a hired hand; and the presence of these ten families tends to develop a nearby community where possible seasonal workers may be found.

But, more important than this, the argument is based on a fallacious supposition. It supposes that the thousand acres of pears will continue to be pears after the family farmers own those acres. This will most certainly not be the case. The family farmer, in order to keep himself employed the year round, will diversify his crops. The thousand acres of pears will now be perhaps only a hundred acres of pears. Lettuce, prunes, walnuts, grapes or other suitable crops will make up the difference. A cow and a few chickens, perhaps a hog or two, will take the place of some of those pears.

#### ARGUMENTS PRO AND CON

Why, in view of these terrible conditions existing among the California agricultural workers, due to the seasonal demands of the large commercial farms, are certain groups seeking to remove the protective 160-acre-limitation clause in the Central Valley project?

They say that this provision is unworkable in California. They point to the fact that much of this land is already cultivated and not idle land, which was the concern of the original Reclamation Laws. And they claim that because of the prevalent practice of pumping water from underground strata, the Government could not charge for water which would seep into the substrata.

The Government officials, realizing these difficulties, do not claim that they must not be considered. They insist, however, that the solution is not to remove the restriction entirely, but to work out some practical plan whereby the technical difficulties can be solved without throwing aside the traditional American land policy. In fact, they are now working on such a plan. At the very least, there is no sound reason why the law cannot be applied to the more than half a million acres which today are uncultivated. Most of this land is in large holdings. There are, for example, 100,000 acres of undeveloped irrigable land in the southern end of the project owned for the most part by the Kern County Land Company.

It should not be overlooked that water flowing on these dry lands, today worth only nominal sums, will increase their value \$50 to \$125 an acre. The question is: who is to get this profit? The large landowners? Or the returning soldiers, whom the Government wishes to settle on the land?

If the traditional American land policy is discarded in the Central Valley project, it will be the opening wedge to discard it also in other national projects—even where technical difficulties do not exist. This is clear from the attempt of the sponsors of the Elliott Amendment to argue from two apparent exceptions—one in Nevada and the other in Colorado—that it has been done before, and why not now? In the Colorado case, about ninety-eight per cent of the farms were already under 160 acres; so that the goal of the Reclamation Laws had already been achieved. The relaxation, moreover, extended only to previously irrigated lands. In the case of Nevada, it is said that the productivity of the soil was such that a farm with more than 160 acres could still be called a family-size farm.

At the present moment it is not certain what specific means will be sought to remove the 160-acre limitation clause from the Central Valley project. All that is certain is that the attempt will be made. The early future should tell whether the big landowners will seek to revive the Elliott Amendment or will seek something like the same result by: a) getting through Congress a "compromise" which will give the shadow to those who adhere to principle and the substance to those who own the land in large blocks; b) paralyzing enforcement; c) removing the Central Valley project from the jurisdiction of the Bureau of

Reclamation, and thus the Reclamation Laws; or by some other means achieving the same ends.

All such attempts to exempt the Central Valley project from the 160-acre limitation clause must be defeated. The economic, social and religious interests of the nation demand that no hasty action be taken in reversing the traditional American policy of favoring the family-size farm.

## STUMPING FOR GOD

MARY VIRGINIA DOYLE

*Or would you rather swing on a star,  
Carry moonbeams home in a jar,  
And be better off than you are . . .*

Imagine a sleepy Southern town being snapped out of its after-dinner lethargy by the strains of this song. It is just about eight o'clock: the town loafers are already deep in the evening's tobacco-stained discourse; the boys and girls are sitting on the curbstone in front of the one movie theatre; and the older folk in rocking-chairs are observing all from their front porches. Suddenly a maroon station wagon sweeps into town loaded with pamphlets, people and public-address system. Pulling into the center of town, it disgorges three young girls and a man, two black-and-white-robed Sisters remaining sedately inside. In a twinkling the public-address system is set up and the notes of *The Victory Polka, Home on the Range, There's a Star-Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere, or Swinging on a Star* can be heard for blocks around. When the music stops, the three girls mount the platform at the back of the station wagon, bless themselves and pray aloud. They salute their small American flag; two of the girls step off the platform and the third one begins an explanation of the program.

These are the preliminaries to what is commonly called "street preaching," though "street teaching" is a more accurate designation. The general purpose of this work is to break down prejudices, combat false notions of Catholicism and make friends for the Church. Today this work is done by some seminarians, priests and lay people interested in Catholic Action. It is usually carried on by giving open-air speeches on street corners, in parks or almost anywhere a crowd can be gathered. The speeches, which explain various doctrines and beliefs of the Catholic Church, are always supplemented by questions from the crowd.

### ORIGIN OF MOVEMENT

The movement had its origin in the Catholic Evidence Guild founded in London in 1918. In an effort to reach the masses of Protestants, who were hostile to or even unconscious of the Catholic Church and its doctrines, Catholic laymen of England went out into the parks and the streets to teach Catholicism. Although the movement is only about twenty-five years old, it is one of the strongest and fastest growing forms of Catholic Action. Mr. F. J. Sheed is one of the outstanding figures in the international Guild movement; David Goldstein is one of its leaders in America.

So far as we know, the Rosary College Catholic Evidence Guild is the only college group of women doing this work. Its first Catholic Evidence workers, or "street teachers," went to Oklahoma in 1935, and from then until 1941 seven different groups worked in Oklahoma. In 1942 work in North Carolina was begun—and promises to continue during the summers to come. Last summer, for the first time, two girls were sent to Louisiana.

To give an idea of the need for this type of work in the

territory where we spoke—the Smoky Mountain Region of North Carolina—here are a few statistics concerning the Catholic population. In an area embracing seven counties there are only seventy-five Catholics and two churches. In this same area there are thousands of Protestant churches with large congregations.

In preparation at our college, those who aspire to be "street teachers" are offered a course in Catholic Evidence work. The subjects discussed in this class serve as a good background for the summer. From the class are chosen two or three girls who are actively interested in Catholic Action and who possess a fairly good speaking ability.

This past summer three of us went to North Carolina—Betty Ryan, Helen McGrath, and I. Betty had graduated from school in June; so this was to be her last year as a Rosary College street teacher. Helen and I, who were new and slightly hesitant about speaking on street corners to strange people, envied Betty her two years of experience. We vainly tried to imitate her calm, poised manner and authoritative way of answering difficult questions. Helen, too, had the advantage over me; she was aided in "making friends for the Church" by long black hair and a beautifully soft Australian accent. As men composed the major part of our audience, a pleasing appearance was no handicap, although it often brought forth from eligibles such embarrassing queries as, "C'n you Catholic girls court?" We were always accompanied by two Sisters from school.

### PLACES AND PEOPLE

Waynesville, North Carolina, where Saint John's Church and School are located, is the center of the street-teaching mission. Because most of the Catholics of the parish live in Waynesville, we did not talk there, but went instead to some of the more remote districts. Our first town was Sylva, North Carolina. There we spoke in a used-car lot directly across from what must easily be the noisiest and busiest café in town. That first night we were all a little frightened. As we drove into our car-lot, Betty assured us that there was a very good crowd for a first night, though Helen and I could see no one but a few men sitting on the steps of a vacant store across the street. We were horribly disappointed, and I know I would have welcomed a train ticket home right then, or even a critical case of aphonia. But, as if by magic, as soon as Betty started her introductory speech windows flew open, heads came leaning out; passers-by came to a halt, but always across the street; little children appeared from nowhere to stare open-mouthed; and intent faces peered out of parked cars. Our crowd had arrived, but those first few minutes in Sylva were the most wretched and agonizing of the whole trip. We soon learned that the number of our listeners would range from thirty to forty on Monday night and from one hundred and fifty to two hundred on Saturday afternoon.

Our main opposition in Sylva was a bearded, white-haired Holiness preacher who threatened to "come loaded for geese and ducks" because we needed our "feathers plucked." However, we found out that the poor old fellow gathered a few pennies by preaching about death and "the lake of fire" whenever he could find listeners. Either he felt that we were unfair competition with our microphone and free talks or he wanted to cash in on our publicity.

Since memorizing seemed necessary to avoid "ad-libbing" ourselves into heresy, the first week we were busy learning the talks which we had written when still at school. Besides this, we spent many long hours studying the Bible. This was an essential part of our program because we were now in the "Bible Belt." The greatest compliment that one of our

listeners could give us about a talk was to say, "That was straight Bible, ma'am."

Our second week was spent in Bryson City, which has a Catholic population of one—Pappy Evans, converted after being a Baptist for sixty years. Dynamic little Pappy Evans is a one-man propaganda unit, constantly discussing his religion with the townspeople and vainly trying to engage the Protestant ministers in arguments, which the latter have wisely learned to avoid. Pappy, of course, is in his glory when the street teachers are in town and passes out our pamphlets in carload lots.

From Bryson we went to Franklin. Here our audience came closer to the station wagon instead of staying safely across the street, because we were not allowed to use our microphone. The use of any sort of public-address system has been outlawed in Franklin. One of the preachers in that county had used one, stirring up the people into a frenzy; when he was put into jail for disturbing the peace, his followers turned a hose on the jail while trying to get him out. Since then the people of Franklin have been very much against the use of loudspeakers. Our big day in Franklin was Saturday noon: we spoke on our usual corner, the Salvation Army with singer and guitar entertained across the street and some Holy Rollers held a revival meeting on the opposite corner. There were enough people for all of us to have large crowds. But I must admit right here that our two black-and-white-robed companions were the biggest drawing-cards of our program. At the very sight of "them black witches" little children would scream and run to hide behind posts or their parents. Often the parents themselves would stare wide-eyed, mouths drooping. Some of these people had never seen nuns before; so you can imagine the effect on them. If the Sisters were sitting in the station wagon, the crowd would surge around the car, their faces pressed against the glass, but always on the alert to jump back the moment one of the "black robes" turned her face to look at them. About one-third of our questions was on the subject of nuns.

Our last week was spent in Murphy, North Carolina. This was our favored objective, as we were the first street teachers to visit this town. There were absolutely no Catholics to pave the way for us in Murphy, but I think this rather enhanced our position, for the people of the town were more than ordinarily curious to see "real flesh-and-blood Catholics." The questions here were of a more intellectual type, on such subjects as the nature of the soul and what constitutes happiness. Even the fact that we were not allowed to use our loudspeaker after the second evening did not dampen our spirits.

#### GETTING ACQUAINTED

Thus ended our four weeks of street preaching. In looking back, we find that the question period at the end of the lectures is the most profitable phase of our work. It is then that we get down from our platform and talk to individuals. We come to know the people and they come to know us, although it is often the middle of the week before they lose their shyness and come forth with many questions. From town to town the questions vary little, and are often characterized by a deep-seated bigotry or gross misrepresentation of some Catholic doctrine. These people have never met any Catholics, and thus have never had a chance to have their errors corrected. Some of the most common questions are: Why don't priests marry? Why don't you have complete immersion when you baptize? What is the Rosary? Do you adore the Blessed Mother? What does your church teach regarding gambling and tobacco? Are you girls going

to be nuns? How much do you pay your priests to have your sins forgiven?

We try to answer these questions in our most sincere manner but can often sense the doubt still lingering. But what more can one expect? These people have been taught all their lives to believe as true what three young college girls now tell them is false. But no matter what they believe, the mountain folk are invariably polite. They may heartily disagree with you, but the instances of heckling are few and far between. They have a reticent manner that often appears to the stranger as hostile, but after three or four nights in one town we had usually made some very good friends.

Why do they bother coming to listen when they don't believe us? Because they are hungry for the truth, and somehow, as one man said, "What you girls have to say sounds pretty good to me." There must be many years of breaking down and building up before there will be many conversions in the South; but until then "street teachers" can do their part by just bearing witness to the truth that Catholics do not have horns.

## A NATIONAL MISSION FOR POSTWAR AMERICA

REV. JOHN K. RYAN

THE PERIOD following a victorious war is of an especial importance in the life of a nation and its citizens. It is a time of readjustments and new departures. Men and women whose course of life was suddenly interrupted by the war now make decisions and changes that would be unthought of in the routine of peace. Energies that lay fallow or were directed to the purposes of war are now turned to new pursuits. New institutions, new practices and new products are introduced. The spirit of change is so great that no one and no institution in the community can fail to be affected in some way.

At such a time it is of particular importance that the Church exercise its leadership. In the midst of turmoil it must be a stabilizing and conserving force. To use the words of the prayer, where there is hatred it must sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

#### PEACE BRINGS OPPORTUNITY

The war and the peace present immense problems to the Church, but they present immense opportunities as well. For in this period of peace—in this time of grace, one may say—that immediately follows the war, the Church as well as the world can do things that would be impossible at other times. In the first fresh period of peace, before society has again reverted to set ways and before a new spirit of disillusion has swept over men's minds, the Church has a uniquely favorable opportunity to make its offers and demands and to get a hearing for them.

One way to seize this unique opportunity is to organize a National Mission. Such a mission would be conducted throughout the entire nation. It would be completed in all the dioceses within a stipulated period, although not necessarily in every parish and every diocese at exactly the same time. Its nature and purpose would be threefold: 1) it would be an act of reparation for evils done during the war and an act of thanksgiving for the return of peace; 2) it would

aim at arousing a vigorous and united Catholic spirit in both clergy and people for the trying times ahead; 3) it would be a call to lapsed Catholics to return to the Church and to non-Catholics to come into the Church.

That we will need to give thanks and to make reparation when peace comes is evident. We think of the frightful orgy of hate and slaughter in which so large a part of the human race has been engaged. We think of the destruction of whole states and races. We think of the damage that has been done to the Church and to its people, its program, its institutions and its authority. We think of the injury done to the family and of the sufferings of countless individuals. We think of how lightly America has suffered in comparison with other nations.

Because of these things, we know that it is the first duty of the Catholic community in America to thank God when at last the beginnings of a peace have been made. We know that we must attempt to make some act of reparation for the sins and crimes that have marked these years of total and global war. This should not be left to individual Catholics alone. It should be a corporate act by the entire Catholic community, with all the advantages that attend such a corporate act.

#### UNITY AND STRENGTH

Since this National Mission will be an act performed by the great mass of American Catholics, its effect will be to unite us all—Bishops, priests and people—in one great nation-wide act of religion. For the future we shall need unity and the strength that comes from unity as we have never needed them before. No thinking person can doubt that an attack is being prepared upon the Church that will be different from any made in the past, and perhaps more devastating and harder to resist. Against such an attack we shall need all our resources of mind and will and heart. Even more shall we need the grace that comes to us only from God and His Church.

This strength from unity and from grace is needed not only to repel attacks but also to make our positive and dynamic contribution to American society and to the post-war world. When our civilization daily sinks deeper into the morass of materialism and secularism, it is in the Church alone that it can find salvation. Hence we who represent the Church in America must do more than deplore and condemn. We must offer an example in our own lives and deeds of the worth and power of true religion. We must offer moral and spiritual leadership; and this can first come only from the renovation and dedication of individual lives. Because man is a social being and because ours is a social religion, the very fact that millions of Catholics throughout the land are engaged in this great act of faith will have its impact upon ourselves and upon the nation. The vivifying and unifying effect of the Chicago Eucharistic Congress is an instance of this. It is for lack of faith and hope and love that our world is disintegrating and dying; and it is only by them that it will regain its unity and life.

As every mission is the occasion of bringing lapsed Catholics back to the Church, so the National Mission would be an attempt to do this upon the largest scale. The end of the war will return to civilian life men and women who have grown careless and who will stand in urgent need of moral and spiritual rehabilitation. It will bring back others who took up the practice of their religion in the midst of the dangers of war and who now need to be kept close to the Church and the Sacraments. For many in both of these groups the good start that the Mission can give may prove the deciding factor in their religious life.

The excesses and disorders of the war promise to leave to the Church a large number of invalid and broken marriages. The Mission will be an opportunity to reunite couples who are separated and to validate unions made outside the Church. When it is generally known that the Mission has such a purpose and provides an opportunity to correct wrong conditions, that in itself will provide a great psychological advantage. At such a time it is easier to approach people, and those in need of help and advice are more inclined to come forward or listen to their friends.

Finally, the Mission can be made attractive to non-Catholics. It is a patriotic as well as a religious service. It is designed to bring the basic truths of religion home to those outside the Church as well as to the faithful within the fold. It has been asserted that, as a group, American Catholics have been indifferent to the vast mass of their non-Catholic fellow citizens. At the time of a National Mission held at the outset of a new period in American life, a distinctive gesture of good will and welcome should be made to our neighbors who differ from us in religion or do not possess any religion at all.

#### TASK OF ORGANIZATION

The task of organizing and completing this National Mission is one of great difficulty. To provide the large number of priests necessary for giving the individual missions, it is evident that many others in addition to our professional missionaries must be called to serve. In itself this, is in a certain way, an advantage. Pastors, curates, teachers and priests engaged in other activities will be given an opportunity to preach the mission. All of them, both trained missionaries and those called from other work, must approach this unique activity in a fresh spirit and with material prepared especially for this particular exercise.

Preparation for the Mission upon both a national and a local scale is particularly important. National and diocesan committees would have heavy duties in the matter of arranging schedules, providing preachers, building up programs, providing sermon material and getting publicity. With regard to publicity, it is evident that it is needed and that it can be had. The more people know about the nature and purpose of the Mission, the more successful it will be. Since the Mission is a national affair it will be easier to get publicity for it, simply because it is so vast in scope and so ambitious an undertaking.

Finally, it is of the utmost importance to enlist all Catholics in the work. A campaign of prayer in religious houses, schools and homes should precede and accompany the actual Mission. The help of the laity will be in various ways essential to its success. The task of devout layfolk will be not only to attend the Mission but also to line up the lukewarm and the fallen away. Theirs, too, will be the task of contacting interested non-Catholics and extending to them an invitation to attend the Mission and thus to know the Church in a better way.

A National Mission would be more than worth all the labor that it would undoubtedly require. The dangers that beset true religion from every side are too great and too evident to need description. The troubles and disasters that threaten America and the world will change, but they may grow still more violent with the coming of peace. The severest problems that individual men and women must meet are religious and moral, and they can find solution only in the Church. Above all must American Catholics, acting as individuals and as a group, strive to bring the truths and powers of their Faith to the aid of their homeland and the world.

# NEW YORK'S ANTI-BIAS BILL

JOHN LAFARGE

NEW YORKERS are still figuratively rubbing their eyes as they discover the weight of support which public opinion in their State appears to be giving the Ives-Quinn "anti-bias" bill. The purpose of this bill, pending at date in both Houses of the New York State legislature, is to establish a State Commission against Discrimination under existing Executive Law. During the long period when the structure of the bill was being debated in committee, comparatively little attention was paid to it by the general public, in New York City or throughout the State. As the time approached for a vote, however, a sudden alarm was sounded by Chambers of Commerce and various major business interests, as well as by some legislators. A public hearing was demanded, in order that the people should become fully aware of what was being planned for them. But the outcome was quite different from that which was anticipated. When the hearing occurred, on February 20, there were present in favor of the bill representatives of the three major religious groups, including the Catholic; the two largest labor organizations; the two large minority political parties and numerous racial groups. When midnight was reached at the close of the day of hearings, there were still a hundred persons representing different groups and interests clamoring to be heard in its behalf.

As a result, opposition to the bill simply crumbled away, and the leaders of the opposition conceded the next day that the bill would pass without further amendments. Furthermore, the bill enjoyed the active support of Governor Dewey and the accredited Republican leaders in both Senate and Assembly and an almost solid Democratic backing.

Looked at simply from the standpoint of those whom the bill will actually affect, the measure in question will be of interest, obviously, only to the people of the State of New York. But the debates and the general public experience with regard to the New York anti-discrimination legislation will hardly pass unobserved by the rest of the nation. Similar proposals will undoubtedly be considered in other States. The New York experience has also a bearing upon a matter of national legislation, the Senate bill S101, to establish a congressional commission for Fair Employment Practice.

The New York measure (like its Congressional counterpart), does not undertake to *legislate against prejudice*. To call it an "anti-bias" bill is merely to use a convenient abbreviation. Nobody, save the Author of the Ten Commandments, can legislate against prejudice. The bill proposes effective measures to be taken against concrete, verifiable practices, which are of themselves discriminatory.

Opposition to the bill centered upon the idea of attempting to remedy such a situation by "legislative mandate" when it was felt that the only adequate remedy would be found in a process of moral and civic education against prejudice and its kindred errors. The defenders of the bill, however, were quick to point out that they relied by no means upon fines and penalties as to the sole means for achieving their end. The bill, as was noted in a letter on this subject to the New York *Times* of February 21, "specifically provides that when complaints come before the commission created by the bill, the methods of conference, conciliation and persuasion, confidential in nature, will be mandatory in the first instance." It was confidently hoped that, as on the State Labor Relations Board, "the majority

of cases would be solved without reaching the state of complaint and formal hearing and disposition."

Far from understanding the importance of the education process, the bill's advocates believed that the educational processes which the bill provides for and encourages would receive much greater impetus if it were known that the community had already definitely registered its disapproval of practices in themselves immoral and contrary to the entire spirit of our democracy by a legal ban.

The fact that the Ives-Quinn bill has undergone such long scrutiny both in its drafting and in its public appearances is much to the good as a warning against the pitfalls which such a measure must avoid falling into, if it is to achieve its intended purpose. The New York State Catholic Welfare Committee, representing the seven dioceses of the Province of New York, the Most Rev. Edmund F. Gibbons, Bishop of Albany, chairman, after careful consideration of all the pro's and con's involved, presented its brief wholeheartedly endorsing the measure. Said their statement: "The Committee realizes that attitudes cannot be effectively controlled by legislative mandate. But, such proposed legislation, if properly administered, will, the Committee hopes, be a powerful weapon to combat discrimination in employment."

The Catholic Welfare Committee took pains to explain that "there is nothing new about the viewpoint of the Catholic Church on this subject. The Catholic Church teaches that all men are created equal . . . irrespective of nationality, color, social status, or other consideration." The proposed legislation, it was noted, "should be implemented by a sound educational program." The very fine letter of the Rev. David C. Gildea of Syracuse, N. Y., the Secretary of the New York State Council of Catholic School Superintendents, was quoted to this effect. The principles clearly announced and vigorously effected by the New York Archdiocese and by other dioceses of the State illustrate the Catholic teaching on racial problems.

The Committee had already registered its position by insisting on the "broad exclusion from the bill of religious, charitable and educational associations or corporations," which recommendation was followed. Two final recommendations of the Catholic Welfare Committee are of paramount importance, since upon their observance hinges much of the fate not only of the New York "experiment," but of any other ventures in this direction.

In a measure of this kind, very much would depend upon the way in which it would be actually administered. "Members of the Commission should be persons of sound principles, high and true ideals, absolute and unquestioned sincerity, far-seeing prudence and administrative competence."

Finally, all should "approach this matter with the utmost good will and undertake to carry out the principles and objectives of the bill with fairness, with friendliness, with sincere faith in American democracy and with the earnest supplication of God's help and guidance."

Professional trouble-makers and chip-on-shoulder racketeers will attempt for awhile to exploit such legislation. But a firm and wise administration can put an end to their activities, *provided* it receives a reasonable cooperation from employers and others of the public. Indications are very numerous that such cooperation can be expected and readily cultivated. If these and some other practical cautions are observed, and the best elements in the minority groups themselves lend a hand, a Commission such as that which is contemplated in New York will present, as the Catholic committee puts it, "a workable approach" to a problem which in the near future is certain to become acute.

## POSTSCRIPT TO YALTA

BUT A SCANT three months remain before the scheduled meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco. For the benefit of those who are guiding the destinies of that future conference, worldwide Christian consciousness has already registered, in this country and abroad, a multitude of protests against certain obvious injustices which were condoned when the representatives of the three major nations met at Yalta.

No amount of political Byzantinism can justify the extinction of independent nations, such as Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, with the sinister connotation of what this will mean for their respective populations. In the case of Poland, the injustice committed is not primarily concerned with the rightness or wrongness of the boundaries established by the Curzon line, but with the facts that a legitimate government was simply wiped off the map and that populations were transferred from one sovereignty to another without any attempt to ascertain their wishes. With one stroke, the most heroic and best organized underground-resistance movement in Europe was deprived of its head, and not even a hearing was allotted for the representatives of the London Government's case before the Allied Powers for whom and with whom they were desperately fighting a common enemy.

Terrible, however, as are these injustices, with others that have elsewhere been mentioned, it would be unreasonable, and it would not be to the best interests of the wronged nations themselves, to ignore what grounds for hope still remain.

There is nothing inherently strange in the fact that a certain amount of crass injustice will occur in a period like the present. In his broadcast of Christmas, 1944, Pope Pius XII warned us of just this disastrous after-effect of a World War, "while men's spirits are still burning white-hot." And such is particularly apt to be the case when the moral opinion of Christian peoples has only imperfectly been mobilized and coordinated in order to register and proclaim the great principles of international morality.

Furthermore, the men who now decide things for the rest of the world will not live forever. We have to work with them and through them while they still survive, but even while we are doing so we can be building for the critical years to come.

In other words, now that we have roughly assayed the merits and demerits of the immediate past, what shall we concentrate upon for the immediate future?

One matter now facing our decision is fundamental. The injustices we have described are committed not only against the individual nations concerned. They are offenses to an even greater degree, if possible, against the entire community of nations itself. For the community of nations, like any other natural association of mankind, possesses certain rights in its own name, not merely by the delegation of its nation members. And in so far as it speaks in its own name, in the common interest of all humanity, its rights are paramount over those of any individual nation—however, rich, however mighty—which will seek to violate that common good.

The only adequate and lasting remedy, therefore, for such injustices is to be found in the establishment of a general international organization which will interpret the will of this community of nations. Such a GIO will embody in its constitution and enshrine in its court those principles of law and international morality by which its own conscience is governed.

From its very nature, such a general organization will necessarily include provisions for the progressive revision of

treaties, as well as for progressive disarmament. It will achieve its full stature, it will be the complete and final guarantee—humanly speaking—against injustice and the recurrence of world wars, only when the process of disarmament has become complete and the community of nations is equipped with its own police force to express the will of the international community, not the sole will or ambitions of any single people or group of peoples.

The Dumbarton Oaks agreement, through its voting procedure in non-punitive cases, pays a greater respect to the power of public opinion than may at first sight appear. While that agreement is still fluid and in formation is the time to bring to bear the full pressure of public opinion to demand that *now*, not in the dim future, we begin to lay the foundations of an adequate international organization. The material is at hand for us to build upon. We shall see at San Francisco whether any use is now being made of it.

## HOLC REPORTS

TWELVE years ago this coming June, Congress created the Home Owners' Loan Corporation. Like so many of the agencies set up during the first months of the New Deal, HOLC was given the job of salvaging something from the wreckage of the depression. Its special field of activity was the urban home which, after four years of economic stagnation, was then threatened with disaster. Given capital of \$200 million, it was ordered to make emergency loans to home owners unable to meet their mortgages and in danger of losing their property. This it did to the tune of \$3,093,-000,000, aiding in the process more than a million distressed urban home owners.

Commissioner John H. Fahey, of the Home Loan Bank Association, now reports to Congress that the liquidation of this great program is proceeding smoothly and ahead of schedule. Forced to take over 197,680 homes by foreclosure, HOLC has succeeded in disposing of all but 2,000 of them. These will almost certainly be sold during 1945. In addition, repayments of loans are more than satisfactory. During 1944, home owners paid back to HOLC \$379,890,982, which leaves outstanding a little more than a billion and a quarter dollars. Mr. Fahey told the Congress that if present liquidation schedules are maintained, there is a good prospect that HOLC will eventually return to the Treasury its entire original capital outlay. At no cost to the taxpayers, most of the distressed home owners will still have their homes, and have them free of debt.

If, as a good many economists maintain, the future prosperity of modern societies largely depends on a harmonious blending of private and public enterprise, it behooves us to re-examine, in the light of such experiments as HOLC, some of the facile generalizations which have achieved in certain quarters the stature of dogmas. One of these is that private enterprise is necessarily more efficient than public enterprise. Another is that public enterprise is always and everywhere the enemy of private enterprise.

Neither of these beliefs finds much support in the history of HOLC. Even if we apply the strict business test of profits and loss to the operations of this agency, the verdict must be that it has been conducted as efficiently as any private corporation. Similarly there is in the HOLC record little ground for the apprehension that public corporations necessarily threaten private enterprise. As a direct result of

## EDUCATION FOR VETERANS

HOLC activities, almost a million people retained properties that otherwise would have passed to lending institutions of various kinds. If widespread, stable ownership of property is a characteristic note of a private-enterprise economy, the operations of HOLC must be said to have had a favorable rather than an unfavorable effect on that economy.

Nor is this judgment weakened by the fact that HOLC has engaged in activities customarily performed by private lending agencies. When HOLC began operations in 1933, these private agencies, loaded down as they were with poor risks, were unable to perform their normal function. Now, as a result of government intervention, they are stronger and sounder; and the day will come when HOLC will close its books and leave the field free to them.

The moral of all this would seem to be that there are some things, at some times, which governments can do better than their citizens, and which governments must do if their citizens are to enjoy the liberty of private enterprise. The problem of the future is to discover what these things are and have governments perform them as efficiently as possible and with as little politics as possible. HOLC can serve as a model.

**"EQUAL RIGHTS" AGAIN**

REPRESENTATIVE LOUIS LUDLOW fired the opening shot of yet another campaign for his "Equal Rights for Women" amendment on the very first day of the new Congress.

Of all the means of redressing existing legal disabilities, this is probably the worst. True, one is tempted to think of the "equal protection of the laws" which the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed to the Negro. But one had better think twice. That Amendment has "guaranteed" some curious "rights" at times. Says Edward S. Corwin, in *Court over Constitution*:

. . . in the Lochner Case, decided in 1905, we find "liberty" to mean the right of males twenty-one years of age to work in a bake-shop more than ten hours a day and sixty hours a week . . . and in the late District of Columbia Minimum Wage Case, decided in 1923, it meant the right of women to work for less than a living wage. (p. 109.)

There is no assurance that the proposed amendment will not guarantee equally unlooked-for "rights."

The sponsors of the amendment have steadily refused to insert a clause safeguarding industrial legislation designed to protect women. For this reason the AFL and the CIO oppose it, as do many women's societies.

It is by no means inconceivable that, if this amendment should be accepted, women would have to serve in the armed forces. At present, a law excluding Negroes from the Services would be attacked from both sides, as discriminating against Negroes and as placing an unwarranted burden on the white population. Similarly, the exclusion of women from the fighting forces would be a discrimination against them on grounds of sex, and an unwarranted burden on men, who would have equal rights with women.

Where legal disabilities exist, they can be removed more speedily and more securely by the active promotion of proper legislation in the several States than by venturing upon the quicksands of the proposed amendment.

THE AMOUNT OF ADVICE offered by amateurs and professionals alike on the conduct of postwar higher education would fill a shelfful of books. The advice is aimed not only at "education as usual" but also at the unusual situation of the returning veteran. For there is question both of the improvement of higher education as such and of adapting it to the special needs and desires of those who are returning from camp to campus. The two questions, though related, may be dealt with separately. And our immediate concern is with the veteran. What sort of education will be the best for him as well as the most acceptable?

Many fear that plans being laid by the colleges for educating the veteran are lacking in realism. It is thought that in their anxiety to fit the veteran as soon as possible into the normal college atmosphere, college planning committees are failing to recognize that the veteran will only fret and fume over the old, slow academic routine, the old educational bookkeeping, the static devices regulating his entrance to and exit from college. It is even suggested that he will be impatient with traditional curricular patterns; that he will want vocational or technical or professional training rather than a predominantly liberal-arts education. And so—the conclusion runs—liberal education, if it is to meet competition successfully and keep a respectable status, must prepare to exchange its present stock in trade for a new line of goods.

There is both realism and unrealism in this position. No doubt about it, the change from war to peace is an opportune moment for casting off the galling shackles which have enslaved students and teachers to certain academic mechanisms. It is right to provide a quicker tempo of academic advancement for returning veterans. Their greater maturity and experience will dictate peculiar concessions on the side of prerequisites, course demands, etc. But it would be a piece of sheerest unrealism to believe *a priori* that they will have no taste for genuine liberal education. Surveys attempted by a number of large and small institutions clearly show that very many want to be "guided back to civilization," to "learn how to live," to "return and square the record for having bilged out of college before the war," to "learn the arts which are the only hope of democracy and the only way to permanent peace." Those who wrote back to *Alma Mater* in this wise, and many more like them, are troubled by the exigencies of time and of security, but nevertheless they want a genuine liberal education. To offer them anything else would be a tragic mistake.

Planning committees, therefore, should guide their moves to the attainment of two goals simultaneously. Postwar higher education must be ready to take the veterans as they are and appeal to their immediate desires and special needs, and it must also provide for their common and enduring needs as *human beings* in a postwar society. To achieve this there must be wise help and guidance given by people who know well the nature, purpose and value of a liberal education. Teaching this nature, purpose and value of liberal education to their faculties and clientele is probably the most pressing concern now for the colleges. For since 1917 they have too generally capitulated to the multiplication of courses, to science and the scientific method, to the pressure of professionalism and vocationalism and to the attempts of professional educationists to subdue liberal education to their own purposes. If it can recapture its soul and maintain its identity, integrity and philosophy, what liberal education offers to the returning veteran will be not only the best for him but the most acceptable.

# LITERATURE AND ART

## MURDER MOST DELECTABLE

CHARLES A. BRADY

THE BOYS in the critical backroom are at their old game of waking the corpse that never dies: the delectable *corpus delicti* of the detective story. (And, for heaven's sake, lest we involve ourselves in one of those interminable juridical wrangles over the red herring of mistaken identity, let us all, for the duration of this little post-mortem, agree to let that controverted term cover all species and sub-species of shilling shocker, mystery story, tale of espionage, *et al.*) The *New Yorker's* "Bunny" Wilson is the most stridently honest of them all; you may feel rueful, if you wish, over the spectacle of a man with a nickname straight out of the *Amateur Cracksman* spurning our contemporary chronicles of the flash gentry; but it is his prerogative, even if he chooses to exercise it in a somewhat waspish manner.

And he is no random iconoclast, either, since he shows himself willing to worship before the celebrated wax dummy of Sherlock *venerabilis* constructed, in the spring of 1894, by Monsieur Meunier of Grenoble to entrap Col. Sebastian Moran, "the second most dangerous man in London." Mr. Wilson is so willing because the "old stories of Conan Doyle had a wit and fairy-tale poetry of hansom cabs, gloomy London lodgings, and lonely country estates," things which Bernard De Voto cannot detect, finding Conan Doyle "a kind of Tubal Cain," whose stories "we do not think too highly of," an heretical judgment concurred in by Somerset Maugham, who, upon rereading the collected Holmes stories, "was surprised to discover how poor they were."

Moreover, we admit that we find ourselves inclined to agree with the low evaluation he sets upon Dorothy Sayers' *Nine Tailors*, with which egregious and pretentious volume the Mistress of Girton began her abdication of the Holmes' deerstalker cap she had so majestically donned with *Whose Body* and retained without challenge throughout the first seven cantos of the Wimsey canon. And seriously, is Mr. Wilson's downright vindictiveness any more truly offensive than the qualified praise of the other mourners, who do not hesitate to invoke, on such an occasion, Joxer Daly's im-memorial Celtic privilege of speaking *de mortuis nil nisi malum?*

Or, to put it another way, Messrs. Maugham, De Voto, Krutch and even (the best of the lot) Barzun, are masking a certain critical timidity and lukewarmness under a visor of quizzical objectivity. The good fairies who visited the christening feast of American criticism dowered the precocious babe with every gift but one; he was blessed with acuteness, moral earnestness, delicacy; but a humpbacked hag of a visitant (the bad fairy of Puritanism, perhaps, who, if we are to accept Ralph Barton Perry's thesis, brooded over the cradle of Americanism itself) substituted for childhood's customary silver spoon of wonder a pragmatic hornscoop of mistrust of unadulterated joy in letters.

We have no phrenological bump of delight in this country such as permits Oxford University to confer the title Doctor of Letters upon P. G. Wodehouse, and an Oxford Don, C. S. Lewis, to reject any critical criterion that is so inelastic as to exclude Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit*. English criticism has its limitations, Heaven knows; but it is at

least sophisticated enough not to have to rationalize away sheer pleasure in the *tours de force* of fancy; or to seem shamefacedly apologetic before the twin phenomena of a Stevenson and a Chesterton whose penny-dreadful Skelteries are too often regarded in America as lovable aberrations to be tolerated on a par with their toy theatres. Such a jaundiced point of view, to vault to still another plane of fancy, is one reason for American letters not yet possessing an *Alice* or a Christopher Robin.

There is a rich body of critical writing about the detective story in the occasional prefaces and essays of Dorothy Sayers, Monsignor Knox, E. M. Wrong, Christopher Morley and Marjorie Nicolson; there is still room, however, for an esthetic of the form. Such an esthetic rationale is sorely needed on several counts, not the least among these being that misconceptions on this score explain some of the more glaring mistakes on the part of Messrs. Wilson and Chandler, who fall into the ancient snare of rebuking an art form for failing to be what it never had any intention of being. Alexander Pope's shrewd aphorism holds true in this as well as in greater matters:

In every work regard the writer's end,  
Since none can compass more than they intend.

It is idle, therefore, to rebuke the English variety of mystery story for not being realistic, as Raymond Chandler does when he tries "to get murder away from the upper classes, the week-end house party and the vicar's rose garden, and back to the people who are really good at it"; when he praises the realist in murder like Hammett who "writes of a world in which gangsters can rule nations and almost rule cities."

John Strachey objects to this sociological usurpation on the identical grounds upon which Chandler praises it; he bitterly resents "the intrusion of the real world into the fantasy world of detective fiction," a fantasy world which is, "in itself, it is true, bloody, barbarous, sadistic and cruel." Perhaps "world of fancy" would be more precise than Strachey's "fantasy world," but the point is well made; the universe inhabited by Poirot, Holmes and Wimsey is as far removed from naturalistic immediacy as the Forest of Arden or the croquet lawn in *Alice*; murder is mathematical there, as stylized as the Russian ballet; as remote from criminous actuality as real lust is from Restoration comedy; an affair of essences, as is, making the necessary allowances for scale, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Jacques Barzun sums up this aspect of esthetic artificiality under the epithet "high comedy."

In these circumstances it is difficult to see why Edmund Wilson should lapse to the point of indicting the detective-story convention for having "properties" that lack "the elegance of playing cards." As a thing of contrived art the detective story requires "properties," and these properties can be deadly ineffective in the hands of a clumsy property man; but considered solely as properties one would think that the cool crisp heraldic elegance of a playing deck would be perfectly equivalent in simile terms. Moreover, playing cards, since *Alice's* animated deck came tumbling down on her bewildered head, suggest just the requisite fantastic dimension and, more impressively, just the necessary hint of the macabre.

Wilson is especially severe on the masters, Dorothy Sayers, Marjorie Allingham, Michael Innes, whom he re-

fuses to accept as writers of good prose. Since he will not credit the ultimate demonstration of his own reading experience, further argument seems useless, to say nothing of the fact that Chandler and De Voto effectually refute him on this head. It is also probable that he is immune to the seductions of sheer story that, of all literary values, have called most dulcetly to readers', if not to critics', ears from the Siren isle of the *Odyssey* down to the spy-taking activities of Thomas Elphinstone Hambledon in Manning Coles' melodramas of the present war.

But one might have expected that Mr. Wilson, of all men, would admire technique; and Michael Innes, whom he dismisses so cavalierly, is a man of such dazzling virtuosity that the reading public, which prefers mere narrative to technique, has regrettably little time for him. *A Comedy of Terrors*, for example, is as contrapuntal as Henry James could have made it; and *The Daffodil Affair* makes very impressive use of the Freudian paraphernalia that modern criticism has admired in Joyce and Kafka.

On only two mystery writers are these critics, excluding Mr. Wilson in the case of Hammett but not in the case of Chandler, in substantial agreement: Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. André Gide becomes positively dithyrambic over Hammett. "I regard," he says, "his *Red Harvest* as a remarkable achievement, the last word in atrocity, cynicism and horror. Dashiell Hammett's dialogs, in which every character is trying to deceive all the others and in which the truth slowly becomes visible through a fog of deception, can be compared only with the best in Hemingway."

But what of *Red Harvest* as "the last word in atrocity, cynicism and horror?" There is a law of diminishing returns in these matters, in accordance with which, at a certain given point, the emotion of skeptical amusement begins to temper revulsion and terror. It may be that *Red Harvest*'s chapter XXI, "The Seventeenth Murder" (the score is later upped to twenty-three, principals all, excluding extras and supernumerary mobsters who litter the streets of Personville like flies), witnesses its operation. The fastidious Maugham wrinkles a nose at this abattoir indiscriminateness: "I think . . .," he writes, "that the writer should be chary of his murders. One is the perfect number; two are permissible, especially when the second is a consequence of the first, but when you have more, it becomes a massacre and, your sensibilities blunted, you find your novel absurd rather than absorbing."

The case of Hammett is bound up with that of Raymond Chandler, his most notable follower. Chandler's literary pedigree is Hammett, by Cain, out of Hemingway as grand-sire, and he is the latest fashion in detective fiction, on the screen as well as on the newsstand. The secret of Chandler's appeal to the critic—his reader appeal is not nearly so great—probably lies in the vigorous primary color of his city still lifes; here he has all the palette vitality of a French primitivist, like painter Rouault, and the brooding atmospheric power of Georges Simenon's similar studies for France of *les flics et les gangsters*. But a good deal of nonsense, as one might expect, is being written about Chandler's specific qualities—the detective story enthusiast's long memory will reach back to a similar pother over that languid creation, pundit Philo Vance, who stood about as close to his supposed analogues, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Thorndyke, as Sidney Smith's syndicated cartoon Chinaman to the august Confucius.

Wilson likens Chandler to Alfred Hitchcock and Graham Greene. *Double Indemnity*, the cinema success for which he supplied the dialog, and *Murder, My Sweet*—

based on his *Farewell, My Lovely*—exhibit, no doubt, a pungent bite which is indigenously big-city American and which is probably equal to the jampot humors of Hitchcock's British masterpieces; but where are the metaphysical subtleties of Greene? Not that it matters particularly; a mania for comparing and disparaging incommensurates is contemporary criticism's sin of sins. S. J. Perelman's witty *New Yorker* parody, "Farewell, My Lovely Appetizer," may have the last word to say on both Hammett's and Chandler's sentimental brutalities. Secretary Birdie Snaflin asks Private Operator Noonan for an eight-letter word meaning "sentimental." "Flatfoot, darling," I said, and went out into the rain."

The pertinent point is that Mr. Perelman, who can utter a great deal of wisdom in jest, has put an unerring finger on this vivid exponent of the hard-boiled school; he is, in the last analysis, as it is, sentimental. You cannot say the same of the British school at its best.

Chandler's carnage is almost as promiscuous as Hammett's; this is, very possibly, still another limitation from which the British practitioners do not suffer, with their cosy emphasis upon murder as the most human of crimes, to which the average mortal is peculiarly susceptible, instead of incorporated criminality carried on professionally by subhuman gargoyle and gorillas who "commit it for reasons, not just to provide a corpse; and with the means at hand, not hand-wrought dueling pistols, curare, and tropical fish."

This rather skilful if highly impersonal bloodshed of his ends by blunting, not daunting the imagination; it dooms the Chandler pattern to eventual eccentricity, despite brilliant individual successes; it debases the nice economy of what Jacques Barzun has described as the fundamental theme of detective fiction, "the corpse in the library"; fundamental, because it points "the shocking contrast between the order of private life and its untoward interruption." Only war can invest mass killing with tragic dignity; but there you are out of the police corridors and before the windy ramparts of epic.

There are many questions one might ask of the critics, if time served. Is it "all over but the shouting," Mr. Barzun? That is a pessimistic conclusion which Elizabeth Daly, the Manning Coles and Peter Cheyney might well dispute. Do you think, Mr. Chandler, that your hero, with his echoes of the *pícaro* from the Spanish novel, of the frontier (speaking anthropologically and sociologically) and of Bret Harte (to dwell on literary sources) has a survival value equal to the Arthurian and paladin figures of the British tradition? Holmes, Wimsey, Campion and Fortune negligently stand in the breach. Would you admit, Mr. De Voto, that in addition to detective-fiction's appeal as the sole contemporary vehicle of "pure story," it also attracts as the last stronghold of traditional morality where right is right and black is black, as they used to be in the novels of, let us say, Dickens?

This latter query has particular relevance for the Catholic reader who, undoubtedly, has also been distressed by Wilson's contemptuous dismissal of the "Father Brown stories by Chesterton, for which I did not much care." The *Father Brown* stories go much further than the justice of God, a realm familiar to the voyagers in detective fiction, but no longer charted for the mapless relativists of the novel; their well-nigh confessional casuistry opens the gates of mercy through penitence, and in them, to borrow Thompson's daring figure, G. K. C. has invented a sleuth hound of Heaven to harry the fleeing soul into the final custody of jailer God.

## BOOKS

### STATEMENT ON VALUES

THE JOURNAL OF MARY HERVEY RUSSELL. By *Storm Jameson*. The Macmillan Co., \$2.50

PURPORTING TO BE the journal of the granddaughter of Mary Hervey of *The Lovely Ship*, and daughter of Sylvia Russell of *The Captain's Wife*, this excellent literary autobiography is, for the most part, and quite undisguisedly, Miss Jameson's own. A spiritual record, it is not bounded by strict time limits, but covers roughly the summer preceding Munich and the early war years. Against a background of growing horror—the tension of Europe awaiting war, the threat of invasion, the terror of air-raids—we witness the gallant championing by a distinguished writer of the things of the spirit, when the whole world seems doomed to the mechanical measures of totalitarian war.

As president of the English branch of P. E. N., Miss Jameson feels the grave responsibility of all artists in the preservation of civilization, in its highest sense, through the hazards of war. Her letter to P. E. N. centers in allied and neutral countries is perhaps the finest contemporary statement of the value of the arts and the duty of artists to truth, and to the dignity of the human spirit.

But Miss Jameson's own work is her greatest argument for the values she would have upheld. Her journal is a powerful and imaginative creation made up of external events, discussions of esthetics and of modern literature, and the very inner core of her life. In a clear yet hauntingly suggestive prose, which owes much to the French symbolists and their successors, she combines nostalgic introspection with vivid description and many novel-like passages. Chiefly, the reminiscent passages are concerned with memories of the writer's mother, whom she loved deeply, yet about whom she was never at ease. Rising to the stature of the novel are masterly studies of character, climaxed by the story of her father's unhappy life and death, full of irony, pathos and tragic comprehension. Essentially, it is a spiritual solution Miss Jameson finds, an assertion of the triumph of life over death—that death surrounding us today in many guises. She is never afraid, either, to make moral judgments, about herself as well as about others and, though she sometimes ironically deprecates these, it will be enough for her mature readers that they have been made.

JOSEPHINE NICHOLLS HUGHES

### ON INDIA: FAIR AND UNFAIR

VERDICT ON INDIA. By *Beverley Nichols*. Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$2.50

VOICELESS INDIA. By *Gertrude Emerson*. The John Day Co. \$3

THIS DUO takes a divided stand on India. The first is out summarily to condemn India; the second, without taking sides, offers an objective picture of the great majority of the Indian people, who should be the center of any discussion about India, but unfortunately are not, precisely because they are "voiceless."

*Verdict on India*, by an Englishman, is a condemnation of Indian character and culture and Hindu religion. It revives the unfair and out-moded tradition set up a few years ago by Mayo's *Mother India*, of which Mr. Nichols is a staunch supporter.

Hindu religion, the ultimate explanation according to the author of all of India's ills and evils, is a

hotch-potch of the baser passions, sanctified by the Brahmin caste, and personified by crowds of "gods" and "goddesses" who are as hideous as the instincts which created them. One day a psychoanalyst should study the deities of the Hindu pantheon. He would find in it crystallized into the shape of men or monsters, representations of almost every vice known to man. This is the force that drives one-fifth of the human race. It is therefore a fact of urgent and continuous significance to the world (p. 86).

A grave indictment indeed. But note that, by the author's own count which segregates Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and

Untouchables as groups apart, the Hindus are only about 206 millions (or exactly 206,117,000 according to 1941 Census). How could they make this dreaded "one-fifth of the human race?" Just a splash for effect?

If that is the essence of Hindu religion and is the force that "drives the Hindus," let us examine its fruits, since the author warns that "Hinduism is still growing strong in this year of 1944" (p. 84). Where are the sprawling millions, turned out by that religion, of Hindu criminals, gangsters and cut-throats, distorted minds, obscene individuals, sexual abnormalities, violators of family and public morality and, in short, perpetrators "of almost every vice known to man?" Has Hinduism reared a race which has menaced the peace of its neighbors periodically and plunged the whole world into chaos, human carnage and material destruction twice in this twentieth century? Where is the evidence of a people, inspired by such a fanatical religion, who have systematically persecuted, tortured, burnt at the stake or hanged, drawn and quartered members of other religions within the borders of India? If not, then Mr. Nichols' version of Hinduism is false, and is not what "drives" the Hindu masses.

"The elusive Indian" is another from Mr. Nichols' collection of verdicts on India. He asserts that in India he found only mutually hostile Hindus, Muslims and what not, but never an Indian who would proudly acknowledge his Indian nationality: *Civis Indianus sum* (as if any but a chauvinist would parade his nationality in his own country).

Not even a Christian, the author insists, would rise above "these fratricidal hatreds" and "regard himself as a member of one of God's great families, the Indian family" (p. 11). As evidence, he dramatizes the bloody and "unholy row," reported to him by a Christian, to have taken place in a Christian church in Madras during "Mass," the occasion being that "when the *sacred wine* was being offered, a Christian Hindu noticed that the *cup* had been passed to a woman of a lower caste than his." (*ibid. Italics mine*). It certainly was not a Catholic church. But there is question of "Mass"—maybe an Anglican church, we can only guess. From this puzzling single case, the author jumps to his final verdict, apparently drawn from the mouth of the Christian involved in that "unholy row": "Oh, it happens all over India, *in every Christian church*" (*ibid. Italics mine*)—and a "trained" reporter like Mr. Nichols is taken in!

It is impossible to analyze each of Mr. Nichols' verdicts on persons, institutions, manners and customs. Most of them carry the same earmarks of incomplete and flimsy evidence, and patent color-blindness. Pity that they should be expressed with a disarming dogmatism and in a brilliant journalistic style.

As to his omissions. India is, after all, what it is, not only because of its people, but also because of its rulers, its Government. Should not a verdict on India include a judgment of its rulers too? They have been controlling its destinies for more than 150 years. The author invokes the words of Christ, "By their fruits shall ye judge them," in order to condemn the Indians, looking only at their bad fruits. What about the fruits of the Christian Government? There are the good fruits of law, order, defense against outside aggression (!), railways, some irrigation canals, and the disputed benefits of the English language (not more than one per cent of Indians can speak, write or read it), the parliamentary institutions (without the substance) and the unified form of government (with officially sanctioned communal divisions). And the pile of bad fruits: the abysmal poverty, appalling illiteracy, low public health, scandalous public sanitation, prevalence of easily preventable diseases, woefully inadequate medical relief, the stunted industrial development, and the most expensive administrative system in the world. Indians regard these as their gravest problems, and they want to solve them for themselves. Mr. Nichols just makes a few clever remarks about these problems, and in effect glosses over them. Is it Christian decency to denounce and put the victim on the spot, and give the master a *carte blanche*?

This reviewer is by no means pretending that everything is perfect with the Hindus, or Christians—in short, with the Indians. They have their shortcomings, their vices, but not

vices only. An honest, objective and impartial criticism of India is most welcome, at this juncture, even to the Indians. But certainly not Mr. Nichols' hasty, one-sided and exasperatingly cocksure condemnation and vilification of everything purely Indian. His protest that the book is "a completely individual expression of a personal point of view" and "not British propaganda" and that "in some ways I hate it myself" (Foreword), sounds hollow and ironical. The injustice has been done and publicized. Fortunately there have been other recent English accounts of India, such as Mr. Brailsford's *Subject India* and Mr. Hoyland's *Indian Crisis*, more competent and more objective than Mr. Nichols' shallow "Verdict."

*Voiceless India* is such an objective and competent book. A simple record of "the day-to-day life of one little northern Indian village as it unfolded before my eyes over a period of many months," without any attempt at "creating a particular impression or advancing any political thesis" (Foreword). And yet the book reads like a novel and carries the mark of an objective report.

It is always fascinating to observe at close range the life of a foreigner but, more so, the life of a whole community of foreigners. The life that is unfolded in the pages of this book—with remarkable understanding, fidelity to truth and a wealth of colorful detail—is not only of the few hundred Indians of Pachperwa (Village of Five Trees), but of the nearly 90 per cent of the well-nigh 400 million Indians, whose home is the village and whose sustenance comes from the soil. This vivid account throws into bold relief, against the background of the villagers' daily life, their ideals and aspirations, their virtues and vices, their simple joys and their crushing burden of sorrows, privations and sufferings, and withal their dogged determination to hold out to the last. The author commands the rare gift of making the reader see and feel things just as she experienced them.

The oft-repeated, discussed and distorted Indian problems of castes, religions, races, languages, child-marriages and the "sacred cow," can herein be seen in their true nature and just proportions. We see the relations, in their concrete setting, between the Hindus and the Muslims, the high castes and the low castes, the rich Zamindars and Princes and their poor tenants and subjects, and the Indian people as a whole and their foreign rulers.

None who has known the reality would hesitate to endorse wholeheartedly the author's account of Indian life. Poet Tagore in his Preface to the first edition of this book paid a glowing tribute of gratitude "for the masterly picture she has drawn of our pathetic village life, so vivid and yet so sober in its color—the honest color of truth."

It is her rare womanly intuition, her understanding born of self-identification with the object of her study (without impairing her critical faculties) and her intellectual honesty to see things as they were, which have enabled her to appraise and appreciate some of the fundamental aspects of Indian life with greater truth and justice than many a shallow writer and reporter.

This book offers what is most needed at present, an insight into the mentality of the Indian people, and provides the necessary background for the understanding of their problems. It is curious and no less gratifying to note that the best novel of late on India was *Indigo*, by a woman, and the best general book on India happens to be also by a woman, Gertrude Emerson. LOURDU M. YEDDANAPALLI

## MORE ARTICULATE AFRICA

WITHOUT BITTERNESS: WESTERN NATIONS IN POSTWAR AFRICA. By A. A. Nwafor Orizu. Creative Age Press. \$3

FOR US AMERICANS an important consideration in this smaller world of 1945 is that West Africa faces our eastern coastline and that West-African air bases in alien hands in the postwar years would be a potential menace to American security. As a consequence, economic and social relations between America and Africa are bound to develop in the near or immediate future.

A fact of much importance for the postwar world, and one which students of American foreign policy no doubt observe,

is the rather rapid formation in Negro Africa of a socio-cultural elite of the European-American pattern. This elite, as the political force of the New Africa, will see to it that the voice of the Negro continent is heard and the rights and obligations of Africa are discussed at all future World Conferences for peace or war.

Nnamdi Azikiwe is the name of the Negro leader who is gradually becoming for Africa what Ghandi and Nehru are for India or what Sun Yat-sen was for China. Already Azikiwe is the political spokesman for many millions of Negro Africans. He is popularly known as "Zik." Mr. Orizu is a disciple of Zik. Like Zik, he belongs to the Ibo tribe of Nigeria. Both are graduates of Columbia University.

To Zikism, a name which stands for Zik's political and socio-religious philosophy, five chapters of this book are devoted. In Zik's neo-paganistic socio-religious principles few Americans will be really interested. But in economics and politics, Zik is realistic. He demands self-determination for the peoples of Africa in general and for his native Nigeria in particular. Throughout his book, Mr. Orizu, as a true follower of Zik, damns European imperialism in Africa with all its concomitant evils without making much reference to all the good occasioned by the presence of the white man in Africa. In Nigeria, for instance, perhaps some modicum of credit goes to British imperialism for its contribution to the onward march of renascent Africa?

Mr. Orizu warns Christianity not to be a tool of imperialism in Africa. The context implies that he has not the Catholic Church in mind. But the following passage from his book speaks for itself:

To the Catholic missionary the aim of education is to create a human being who understands the insignificance of his being and the magnanimous position of God; a Church member who repeats the Ten Commandments in Latin and English with no reference to the vernacular of the people; a repentant sinner who resigns himself to the mercy of God and looks upon the Holy Father as the symbolical telescope through which man has a communion with his Creator.

The author, who makes an earnest appeal to the American public to rally to the cause of Africa in every way, except politically, seems oblivious of the fact that the American public to which he appeals includes between twenty and thirty millions of these insignificant beings called Catholics! Has Mr. Orizu ever entered one of the hundreds of Catholic churches and schools in his beloved Ibo-land? Apparently not, for there all prayers, catechism and instruction are conducted in the vernacular, except in the higher grades of school and in college.

Mr. Orizu makes the above remarks and several others without bitterness. This is quite true, however paradoxical it may seem. To understand it all, Americans would first have to see and hear Zik, at a football final in the capital of Nigeria, cheering for the all-Ibo, all-Catholic team of Christ the King College, Onitsha, in its efforts to become the Notre-Dame-like champions of Nigeria and West Africa!

MARTIN J. BANE

RICHARD E. MULCAHY, S.J., after active experience on the San Francisco Stock Exchange and several years of economic study at the University of San Francisco and other Catholic colleges, is now connected with Alma College, California.

MARY VIRGINIA DOYLE, a student at Rosary College, River Forest, Ill., was one of the street teachers who invaded the South last summer.

REV. DR. JOHN K. RYAN is connected with Caldwell Hall, Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

REV. LOURDU M. YEDDANAPALLI, S.J., a native of India, studied extensively on the Continent and is now professor of chemistry at Canisius College, Buffalo.

REV. MARTIN J. BANE, S. M. A., was a missionary in Africa for many years.



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## THEATRE

**THE STRANGER.** We have had too many plays featuring Jack the Ripper to get much excited over him at this late day, especially when he appears in a static play like *The Stranger*, written by Leslie Reade and produced and staged by Shepard Traube at the Playhouse. Mr. Traube, whose production of *Angel Street* furnished New Yorkers with assorted thrills for several years, would seem to be a high authority on crime plays, but he missed on this one.

*The Stranger* is a slow and talky melodrama in which most of the action takes place off stage. We don't see much happening, which is probably fortunate, since the pictures of the Ripper slicing up women he has murdered are not those an audience would care to brood over. Still there ought to be more going on than speeches, most of them dull.

The Stranger is not the murderer. Most members of the audience know that almost from the beginning. He is a nice-natured, hard-working young refugee in London, being suspected of the blackest crimes by nearly everyone who knows him. A nice girl has faith in him, which helps, and in the middle of the third act the real Ripper turns up. Nobody is surprised or thrilled. They have heard too much talk.

It must be difficult for any actor to ooze sweetness and light when he is surrounded by suspicion of committing black crimes, but Eduard Franz acts the role as well as any one could. Perry Wilson is good as the girl who believes in him and Wendy Atkin does some convincing character work as a London trollop. So does Eva Leonard-Boyne as a Mrs. Gregory. Eugene Sigaloff is the most persistent of the stage orators in a new wordy group called the International Workman's Education Club. Boris Aronson's scenery and lighting are excellent and so are Miss Bogdanoff's costumes.

**SIGNATURE.** Elizabeth McFadden wrote a good murder play some years ago. We can only suspect that she had too much alleged "help" in *Signature*. A Virginia judge is the murderer in this "thriller," but our hero and his sweetheart are under dire suspicion till the Judge is run to earth by a fearless young attorney who faces right up to him.

Richard Skinner and Dorothy Willard, the producers, put on the play at the Forrest, but it was taken off after two performances. It had a big cast including Frederic Tozere, Donald Murphy, Marjorie Lord, Lyster Chambers, Anne Jackson and two dozen others who shared the general debacle. *Signature* was a play without suspense, excitement or mystery. There were all sorts of mechanical devices to create thrills, such as self-opening doors, strange noises, wild winds and the like—all too old-fashioned to succeed.

ELIZABETH JORDAN

## FILMS

**THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY.** Any screen adaptation of an Oscar Wilde novel is more or less certain to cause controversy, and this one will. It is the weird record of a man and his conscience, where, most fantastically, the fellow's moral decadence is reflected through a portrait that was painted in his early, guiltless years. This study of sin and degradation is not a pretty thing; in fact, there are moments when its impact is horrible, terrifying and gruesome. The title character's creed of pleasure, suggested first by a cynical friend, leads him along a debased pathway where cold-blooded murder and every kind of vice marks the debaucher's progress. Of course, the ugliness of sin is painted in no uncertain terms, but some in the audience may wonder whether this excursion into the depths of human depravity is necessary to preach such a celluloid sermon. On the artistic side, the picture is noteworthy with its studied pace, its dramatic moments, its interesting photography. The casting, too, all the way through, is splendid. George Sanders impersonates the sardonic preacher of hedonism with the proper emphasis. Hurd Hatfield, as the young hero who wishes, and has his wish granted, to give up everything, even his soul, so that he can stay young while his portrait grows old, contributes an amazingly fine performance in a truly difficult role. Donna Reed, Angela Lansbury, Peter Lawford and Lowell Gilmore are some of the others who leave vivid impressions. As this fantasy develops, references are made to pagan philosophies of pleasure, with quotations from Oscar Wilde, Flaubert, and Omar Khayyam. All these things serve to make this strictly adult entertainment. It does portray sin as sin, but it is suggested only to those who can stand a sometimes trying exposition of evil. (MGM)

**THE LIFE AND DEATH OF COLONEL BLIMP.** Some may find this saga of an English sportsman and soldier, from the days of the Boer War down to the present conflict, overlong, since it takes more than two-and-a-half hours in its telling. However, it has human warmth, some delightfully humorous touches and moments of real drama and is one of the finer current British films. The leading character is an English officer who epitomizes the cartoon character made famous in England by Low, and the story is a history of his career, his loves and his ideas down through the years. Disillusionment comes to the old fellow before the finale when he realizes that this war is different from the others, that it is no cricket match to be fought with good sportsmanship. Roger Livesey, Deborah Kerr and Anton Walbrook have the leading roles. Mature audiences will like this thought-provoking, often powerful piece. (Archers-General Film-United Artists)

MARY SHERIDAN

## PARADE

AS ADVERSITY in the shape of the current cigarette famine loomed menacingly, the divergent views of literary men on the subject of adversity were widely recalled. . . . Strangely enough, various incidents connected with the famine confirmed every one of the divergent views. . . . Carlyle's analysis of adversity, to wit: "Adversity is sometimes hard upon a man; but for one man who can stand prosperity there are a hundred that will stand adversity," had a confirmation. . . . In Dallas, Tex., a judge, after fining seven men for disorderly conduct, inquired what they were fighting about. "A cigarette," replied the men. . . . Not only fighting for cigarettes; fainting after obtaining cigarettes was also observed. . . . In Newark, N. J., a citizen walked into a railroad office, jokingly asked an employe for a cigarette. The employe actually handed him one. Stunned, the citizen stared glassily for a moment; then fainted. . . . In Baltimore, a resident stood in a cigarette line. When he finally reached the counter and got his hand on a pack, he fainted. . . .

Other events gave support to the views of Francis Bacon and Shakespeare. Bacon felt that "adversity is not without comforts and hopes"; Shakespeare saw something "sweet" in adversity. He looked on adversity as something ugly and venomous but with a precious jewel in its head. A certain

type of toad has these characteristics. . . . Oregon contributed comfort to the Bacon-Shakespearian view. A railroad conductor there entered a store and got a pack of cigarettes—a pack of Duke's Cameos with a picture of Lillian Russell on the cover and the date March 1, 1900, on the stamp. . . . Not only Oregon, however. . . . The bridge expert, Ely Culbertson, playing for a cigarette a point, won several months' supply. . . . In Chicago, a manufacturing firm obtained a secretary by offering thirty dollars a week and free cigarettes. . . .

Likewise receiving confirmation from current events was the non-"sweet" La Rochefoucauldian theory that "in the adversity of others we often find something that is not exactly displeasing." . . . Leaders of the anti-smoking movement, in published statements, showed they were not at all displeased by the plight of the cigarette-loving multitudes. . . . Opposed as they are with regard to the "hardness" or "sweetness" of adversity, Carlyle, Bacon, Shakespeare (and even La Rochefoucauld) would not differ on one characteristic of adversity. . . . They would all see eye to eye on the second portion of Carlyle's statement, to wit, that "for one man who can stand prosperity there are a hundred that will stand adversity." . . . Heaven itself thinks along this line. . . . That is why God chastises those whom He loves. JOHN A. TOOMEY

## CORRESPONDENCE

### CATHOLIC BEST SELLERS

**EDITOR:** I must write a word of appreciation and gratitude for the bravery and intelligence with which the "delicate problem" was attacked in *Catholic Best Sellers* and in which the bad taste of Catholics was underscored, who seem to eat up "Catholic literature" with the greater relish the worse it is.

Chicago, Illinois

SARA B. O'NEILL

**EDITOR:** Though Father Gardiner's task was a delicate one, it was accomplished in a most indelicate way. The review left me with the feeling that Father Gardiner is of the opinion that nothing by a Catholic author should be published unless it has attained the acme of perfection. The Church's ideal is not perfection itself, unattainable by creatures, but "passion for perfection." The existence of the California Sequoias supposes, I presume, the growth of saplings, unless they "just growed up" like Topsy. Thank God that at least a few Catholic writers have the courage to foster the shrubs that will one day develop into Sequoias. . . . This reader finds herself in that group and considers Father Gardiner's criticism "snobbish and ultra-perfectionist."

Roxbury, Mass.

ANNA G. SMITH

**EDITOR:** Congratulations on the excellent article *Catholic Best Sellers*. We think you have accomplished the "delicate task" very well, and have greatly clarified an issue which is of great moment to all who are interested in genuine Catholic literature.

Hartford, Conn.

REV. ANDREW J. KELLY  
*Catholic Lending Library*

**EDITOR:** Perfection is a gradual development, is it not? Why, then, stunt the growth of two authors by such an article as *Catholic Best Sellers*? Why jeopardize the good these two authors have been doing? . . . Will the good done by Father Gardiner's article balance the harm done by the Catholic reading public? . . . Such an article was not only indelicate but wholly uncalled for.

Dorchester, Mass.

SISTER MARY CLARE

**EDITOR:** Particularly has the article *Catholic Best Sellers* (January 27) been of help—I think the exact word is "comfort" to me. It is often disconcerting for a college instructor to set up criteria of literary criticism only to discover them ignored in some Catholic periodical by book reviewers whose only principle is apparently the religious subject matter of the book. Your work on the problems of criticism is very greatly appreciated.

St. Paul, Minn.

AGNES E. KEENAN  
*College of St. Catherine*

**EDITOR:** I quite frankly take exception to some of the *credenda* in *Catholic Best Sellers*. After all, are not these so-called "norms" or "standards" of criticism to a large extent subjective? My characterization of *Three Religious Rebels* would be "inspirational." Why not allow our *Three Religious Rebels* to ride unmolested over a rough and rocky world? It is true that their trappings may be a size too small or their shoes too long—isn't it their hearts that we are interested in? . . . Criticism of consonant note in the fight of light against darkness, virtue against vice, in a drab materialistic world is ill-timed and sows seeds of doubt and suspicion in the minds of even the best intentioned.

Omaha, Neb.

REV. ROBERT A. GARVEY

**EDITOR:** Your Harold C. Gardiner is a godsend. His recent broadsides against two Catholic best sellers, too, were a godsend. He used effective firing power and does not fumble

at the trigger. His analyses of the two Catholic best sellers merit an appreciative hosanna.

St. Leo, Florida

FR. JEROME, O.S.B.

**EDITOR:** Congratulations on the *Catholic Best Sellers* article. It was a job that needed to be done and I am glad that the author had the courage and ability to do it so well. He will probably get nothing but abuse for it, but it may help in the long run and at least will be on the record against *dies irae* when Wilson discovers Father Raymond *et al.* That was a particularly ghastly thought.

Boston, Mass.

REV. JOHN W. RYAN, S.J.

**EDITOR:** It hurts me very much to have *Catholic Best Sellers* sail into Father Raymond because he does not come up to Franz Werfel. If you cannot boost the work of our struggling authors, don't condemn them when they don't turn out masterpieces. . . . For some reason we Catholics seem to be hardened by too constantly answering and explaining away false and bad criticisms so that we are all greatly wanting in the proper balance and charity so necessary to encourage our own people.

Dayton, Ohio

M. J. GIBBONS

**EDITOR:** At long last someone has come forward with the literary honesty to "see the mote in our own eye"—to wit, Father Gardiner in his trenchant and courageous article on *Catholic Best Sellers*. . . . He is to be commended for taking the initiative in this unpleasant task and doing it with as much tact and charity as is consistent with honesty. Too many Catholic reviewers have been pussy-footing around with the issue.

Fenton, Michigan

JUNE ROETCHLISBERGER

**EDITOR:** After telling us all the faults of Father Raymond's book, which seem to have been more than Father Murphy's, *Catholic Best Sellers* exhorts us to read this book. Was the article criticizing or advertising his efforts? You told us that they will give us "food for thought and meditation and perhaps deepen our Catholic lives." . . . Could we Catholics want more? . . . A priest has no business writing a novel unless that novel will do the three things you say these books do. Therefore, these priests have been priests. Why criticize them for not having been laymen like Werfel, Cronin or Kerman? . . . Can a priest "vigorously rub out devotion" as he sets about composing and still claim to be a priest? Was he not ordained "to deepen our Catholic 'lives' rather than entertain?"

New York, N. Y.

PUZZLED

**EDITOR:** The critical articles appearing in AMERICA express views that are just and, in my opinion, the only right ones. In the interest of Catholic letters may they speedily come to be more and more widely known and accepted.

St. Louis, Mo.

CHARLES W. MULLIGAN, S.J.  
*St. Louis University*

**EDITOR:** Congratulations on the chivalry of *Catholic Best Sellers*. *Deo gratias* for its comment on two books close to the heart of so many Religious because Religious wrote them.

Malden, Mass.

SISTER MARY JAMES

**EDITOR:** The question is not a debatable one. The article handled the matter of Catholic best sellers not only delicately but also beautifully and truthfully. . . . It has indeed been distressing to see the enthusiasm accorded to the books you mentioned.

New York, N. Y.

SISTER JULIA MARIE  
*Cathedral High School*

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## THE WORD

OBEDIENCE is not an easy thing. It is not even easy to admit that we have an obligation to obey. For all our dependence on God and people and many things, we are still gloriously and frighteningly independent. We can, if we so desire, defy the world, defy God Himself, and in the thrill of defiance snap our fingers at the consequences of defiance.

One of the earliest things that a child consciously learns is just this sense of independence. Similarly, one of the first things a child resents is being told that "you *must* do this," or "you *must not* do that." We find it so hard to admit our obligation to obey that we often flatter ourselves that we would do so many more good things, if not obliged to do them; and we excuse much wrong-doing on the plea that we are fed up with taking orders.

There may be some truth in it. The wise parent will not give too many orders. The wise parent will try to join love to obedience, so that obedience will become an act of love. God, too, as a wise parent, gives not too many orders, and those He gives are so wrapped in love that the obedience should become easy. For all that, the obedience of children can never be allowed to become merely the acceptance of the wise counsel of equals. There must always be present the basis of the obedience of children to parents. Children must learn to obey, because parents are parents and children are children. They must learn to obey even when the reasons for the command cannot be made clear to them.

We, too, as God's children, do what God commands, not on a man-to-man basis, but on a man-to-God basis. We obey because God is God and we are His creatures, and we must learn that we must obey even when the reason for the order may not be clear to us. "Blessed are they," says our Lord in the Gospel for the Third Sunday in Lent, "who hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11: 14-20).

Unless we are deeply convinced of this first obligation of our nature—God is God and I am His creature and I owe Him absolute obedience—we are likely to look upon our obedience as a favor to God, and remain obedient only as long as obedience is pleasant. Once we do accept our obligation of obedience, then we can go on to make our obedience love and become not only God's creatures but "God's favored children" (Ephesians 5: 1-9).

In the manner of favored children, we strive to please in every possible way. "My eyes are ever towards the Lord," is the beginning of today's *Introit*. The *Tract* takes up the same theme: "To Thee have I lifted up my eyes. . . . Behold as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress, so are our eyes unto the Lord our God."

There is not only obedience implied in these words. There is an eagerness to obey and to serve and to please, even before a command is given. This eagerness turns obedience into love.

The good servant at table does not have to be told what the diner wants. He is there with the water or the salt or the sugar almost as soon as the person at table begins to think of his need. The good host keeps his eyes on his guests. He is holding a lighted match to their cigarettes even before they start fumbling for a lighter. The young man in love has the girl's wrap about her shoulders as soon as she herself begins to think that it is growing chilly.

It is this spontaneous, cheerful service that God expects of us as His servants and His children. "Walk in love," He tells us through Saint Paul, offering us for our model the love "which Christ showed to us when He gave Himself up in our behalf, a sacrifice breathing out fragrance as He offered it to God." And at the end of the Epistle: "You must walk as men native to the light. When the light has its effect, all is goodness and holiness and truth."

It is the same complete, unquestioning, unwaveringly loyal service that Christ demands in the Gospel: "He that is not with me is against me." We must be with Him in pleasant things and hard. We must be with Him in everything. We must be with Him even when the reason for His orders is not clear to us, for He is our God and we are His creatures.

JOHN P. DELANEY

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